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## CHAPTER 1

# THE ROLE OF THE MECHANIZED INFANTRY RIFLE PLATOON (BRADLEY FIGHTING VEHICLE)

*The mission of the mechanized infantry is to close with the enemy using fire and movement to defeat or capture him, or to repel his assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack. Among other things, the mechanized infantry relies on the principles of war and the dynamics of combat power. These basics apply at both platoon and squad levels. This chapter discusses the doctrinal principles of the mechanized infantry rifle platoon. Platoon and squad tactics, techniques, procedures, and drills rely on these principles. It also discusses the skills required of leaders and soldiers at the small-unit level.*

### Section I. MECHANIZED INFANTRY RIFLE PLATOON EMPLOYMENT

Despite any technological advantages our armed forces might have over an enemy, the *only* way to gain the decision in battle is by close combat between ground forces. Mechanized infantry rifle forces equipped with the Bradley fighting vehicle (BFV) play the following main roles in close combat situations:

- Operate mainly at night or during other periods of natural or induced limited visibility.
- Penetrate and hold existing (natural and man-made) obstacles and difficult terrain as pivots for operational and tactical maneuver.
- Attack over approaches not feasible for armored forces.
- Seize or secure forested and built-up areas.
- Control restrictive routes for use by other forces.
- Conduct rear area operations.

#### 1-1. CLOSE COMBAT

BFV-equipped infantry rifle platoons and rifle squads normally operate as part of a larger force. They benefit from the support of armor, artillery, mortars, close air support, helicopters, air defense, and engineers. They also provide their own suppressive fires either to repel enemy assaults or to support their own maneuver.

a. During close combat, platoon leaders consider the following to determine how to employ the BFVs.

- Support the rifle squads with direct fires.
- Provide mobile protection to transport rifle squads to the critical point on the battlefield.
- Suppress or destroy enemy infantry fighting vehicles and other lightly armored vehicles.
- Destroy enemy armor with TOW fires.

b. Success in battle hinges on the actions of platoons, sections, and rifle squads in close combat. It also depends on their ability to react to contact; employ suppressive fires; maneuver to an enemy's vulnerable flank; and fight through to defeat, destroy, or

capture an enemy. For success, the BFV-equipped infantry rifle platoon relies on the ability of leaders and soldiers to—

- Use the potential of both the rifle squads and the BFV.
- Operate their weapons with accuracy and deadly effect.
- Outthink, outmaneuver, and outfight the enemy.
- Use terrain to their advantage.

## 1-2. COMBAT POWER

The elements of combat power (maneuver, firepower, protection, leadership, and information) guide the employment of all infantry forces.

a. **Maneuver.** Maneuver is the employment of forces on the battlefield through movement in combination with fire or fire potential. Its purpose is to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy in order to accomplish the mission. Mechanized infantry forces move to gain and hold a position of advantage over the enemy. In the offense, they maneuver to attack enemy flanks, rear areas, logistics points, and command posts. In the defense, they maneuver to counterattack a flank of the enemy attack. When properly supported by fire, maneuver allows the rifle squads to close with the enemy and gain a decision in combat.

b. **Firepower.** Firepower is the amount of fire a position, unit, or weapons system can deliver. Firepower destroys or suppresses the enemy in his positions, deceives him, and supports maneuver. Without effective supporting fires, the rifle squads could not effectively maneuver. However, before trying to maneuver rifle squads, the platoon leader should establish a base of fire with the BFVs.

(1) A base of fire is direct fire placed on an enemy force or position to reduce or eliminate the enemy's ability to interfere with friendly maneuver. A single weapon or group of weapon systems can provide a base of fire. More effective is a base of fire generated by the BFVs (or another platoon) for the desired effect and for the length of time required.

(2) Leaders must know how to control, mass, and combine fire with maneuver. They must identify the most critical targets quickly. As soon as they do that, they direct fires onto those targets. They try to place sufficient direct and indirect fires on the enemy to keep him from returning fire effectively as well as to keep the platoon from using ammunition needlessly.

c. **Protection.** Protection means preserving the fighting potential of an element so that it can apply that potential with maximum force at the decisive time and place. Platoons must never let the enemy get an unexpected advantage. Rifle platoons and squads take active and passive measures to protect themselves from surprise, observation, detection, interference, espionage, sabotage, and annoyance. Protection has four components: force protection, field discipline, safety, and fratricide avoidance. The platoon leader's includes two basic considerations include—

(1) **Care of the Soldier and His Equipment.** The rifle platoon and squad use sustainment techniques to maintain effectiveness as a fighting force. Soldiers keep themselves healthy to maintain their morale. They observe personal hygiene, physical conditioning, and rest plans. They also keep their equipment in good working condition, and maintain and protect their supplies.

(2) **Actions to Counter Enemy Combat Power.** The rifle platoon and squad use security, dispersion, cover, camouflage, and deception. To protect themselves when stationary for any length of time, they dig fighting positions. They use terrain skillfully while moving mounted. They dismount the rifle squads to increase protection. They employ obscurity as necessary. They overwatch other moving elements and provide suppressive fires when required. They attempt to set the time and place of battle. They must protect themselves, so that they can engage the enemy with power and surprise.

d. **Leadership.** Military leadership is a process by which one soldier influences others to accomplish a mission. Leaders coordinate the other elements of combat power—competent and confident leadership produces effective unit action. The right leadership gives purpose, direction, and motivation in combat. Leaders must know their profession, their soldiers, and the tools of war. Only leaders who embody the warrior ethos can inspire and direct soldiers to do difficult tasks under dangerous and stressful conditions. Leadership is the most important element of combat power.

e. **Information.** Information enhances leadership and magnifies the effects of maneuver, firepower, and protection at decisive points. Leaders know and understand the broader tactical situation, which allows them to develop plans that incorporate the other elements of combat power during a decisive action. Information also allows them to make crucial decisions during execution to increase the opportunity for success.

### 1-3. CAPABILITIES

In accomplishing its assigned missions, the platoon employs combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) assets within its capabilities. The platoon's effectiveness depends on the synergy of its subordinate elements, including its BFs and the rifle squads. To employ the platoon effectively, the platoon leader capitalizes on its strengths. The BFV-equipped mechanized infantry platoon can—

- Assault enemy positions.
- Assault with small arms and indirect fires to deliver rifle squads to tactical positions of advantage.
- Use 25-mm cannon and 7.62-mm machine gun fire to effectively suppress or destroy the enemy's infantry.
- Block dismounted avenues of approach.
- Seize and retain key and decisive terrain.
- Clear danger areas and prepare positions for mounted elements.
- Conduct mounted or dismounted patrols and operations in support of security operations.
- Develop the situation with soldiers (three rifle squads) and equipment (25-mm cannon, TOW, and 7.62-mm coaxial machine gun).
- Establish strong points to deny the enemy important terrain or flank positions.
- Infiltrate enemy positions.
- Overwatch and secure tactical obstacles.
- Repel enemy attacks through close combat.
- Conduct assault breaches of obstacles.
- Participate in air assault operations.
- Destroy light armor vehicles using direct fire from the BFV.

- Employ 25-mm cannon fire to fix, suppress, or disrupt the movement of fighting vehicles and antiarmor systems up to 2,500 meters.
- Use TOW fires to destroy tanks and fighting vehicles out to 3,750 meters.
- Use Javelin fires to destroy tanks and fighting vehicles out to 2,000 meters.
- Operate in a nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) environment.
- Participate in stability operations.
- Participate in support operations.

#### **1-4. LIMITATIONS**

The platoon leader must also understand the limitations of the BFV-equipped mechanized infantry rifle platoon to effectively employ the platoon—

- BFVs are vulnerable to enemy antiarmor fires.
- Rifle squads are vulnerable to small arms and indirect fires when not mounted.
- The foot speed of the dismounted infantryman may establish the pace of operations.
- The BFV poses a variety of challenges in water-crossing operations. Among other things, the platoon could have difficulty finding adequate fording sites or a bridge with a sufficient weight classification.

#### **1-5. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TACTICAL EMPLOYMENT**

Leaders must consider the following guidelines when employing mechanized infantry during the full spectrum of operations.

a. Squads and platoons fight through enemy contact at the lowest possible level. Upon enemy contact, all soldiers and leaders must act at once and follow up. Battle drills are standard procedures that help the platoon take immediate action.

b. Before they can maneuver, squads or platoons in contact *must* establish effective suppressive fires and gain fire superiority. If the platoon or squad cannot move under its own fires, the leader must request support from higher headquarters. Once they gain fire superiority, they maneuver against an enemy position. The BFVs suppress the enemy, move to a dismount location (if caught in the open), and dismount the rifle squads. The BFVs quickly build a base of fire for the rifle squads to maneuver.

### **Section II. MECHANIZED INFANTRY RIFLE PLATOON (BRADLEY FIGHTING VEHICLE) ORGANIZATION**

The mechanized infantry rifle platoon is equipped with four BFVs and is divided into two elements: mounted and dismounted. Figure 1-1 depicts the BFV-equipped mechanized infantry rifle platoon organization. The platoon can fight as unified mutually supporting maneuver elements or as two distinct maneuver elements—one mounted and one dismounted (Refer to Appendix A for details on platoon organization and seating of the dismounted squads.). The platoon must prepare to fight in a variety of operational environments. Once the rifle squads have dismounted, the mounted element provides a base of fire for the rifle squads as they close with and destroy the enemy.

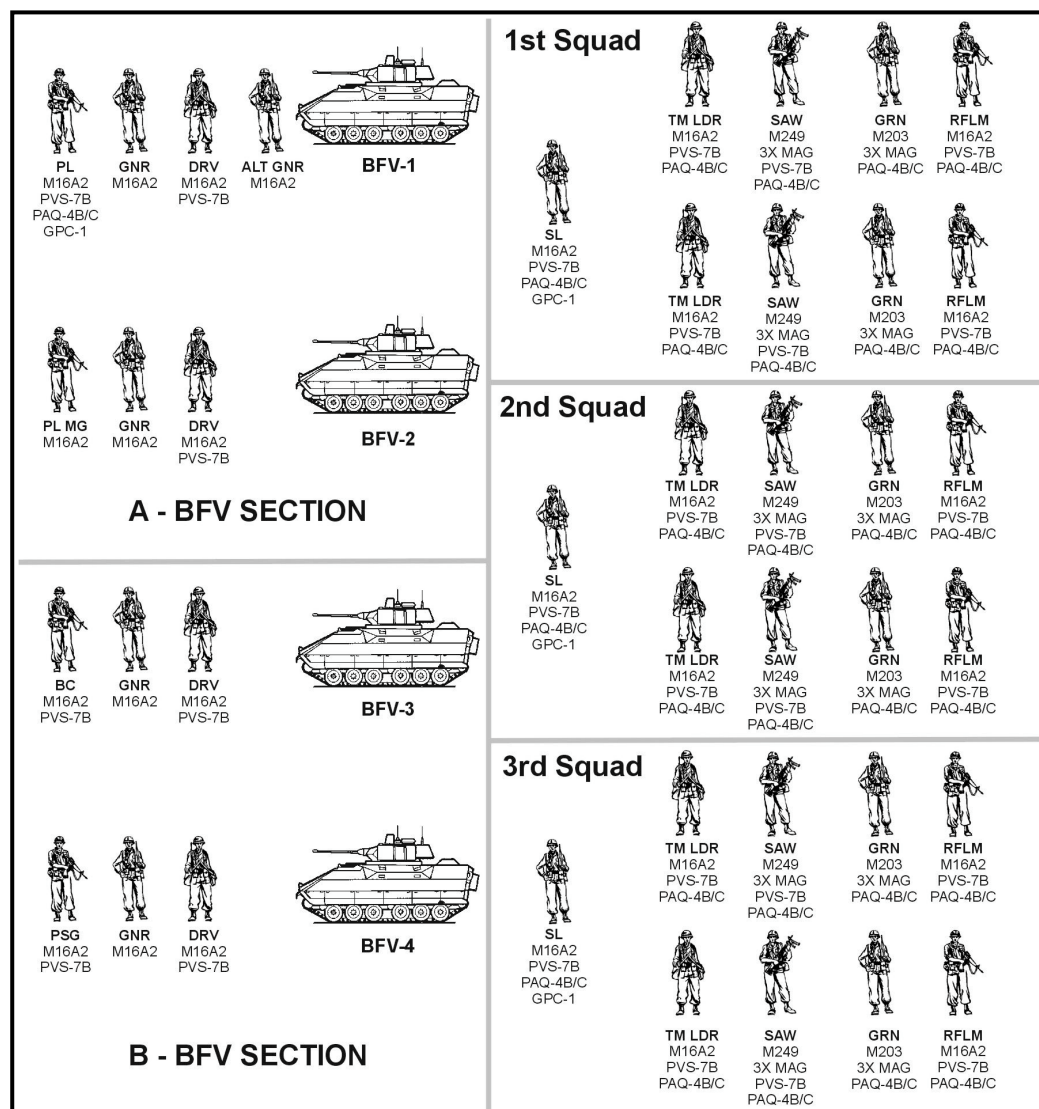


Figure 1-1. Platoon organization.

**1-6. MOUNTED ELEMENT**

The mounted element consists of four BFVs that are organized into two sections (A and B) with two vehicles each—the platoon leader (or platoon sergeant) vehicle and the section leader (wingman) vehicle.

**1-7. DISMOUNTED ELEMENT**

Three nine-man rifle squads make up the platoon's dismounted element. The rifle squad has two, four-man fire teams and a squad leader. Each squad has a CLU and an M240B machine gun. Two riflemen in the squad train and qualify on the M240B and the Javelin. One serves as the M240B (or Javelin) gunner and the other serves as the M240B (or Javelin) assistant gunner, when directed. (Refer to Appendix B for a discussion of the M240B characteristics and employment and Appendix F for a discussion of the employment of the Javelin).

## 1-8. RESPONSIBILITIES

The employment of the BFV by well-trained and proficient soldiers enhances the platoon's capabilities to conduct operations with greater *lethality, survivability, command and control*, and *mobility*.

**NOTE:** The M2A3 has more equipment than previous models of the BFV. This equipment is also more complex than that on earlier models, which requires more cross training to ensure soldiers can fill vacancies or shortfalls in critical positions. Also, because the M2A3 BFV platoon can transfer more information at every level, soldiers must work together more closely than ever before.

a. **Platoon Leader.** The platoon leader bears the responsibility for all that the platoon does or fails to do. This includes the tactical employment, collective training, administration, personnel management, and logistics of his platoon. He must know his soldiers and how to employ the platoon and its weapons. He bears personal responsibility for positioning and employment of all assigned or attached weapons. His list of responsibilities and duties are as follows:

- Leads the platoon in supporting the company and battalion missions. Bases his actions on the mission the company commander assigns him, the concepts of the company and battalion commanders, and his own estimate of the situation.
- Sets the example and the standards.
- Normally dismounts when the situation causes the platoon to dismount.
- Serves as BC when mounted.
- Informs the commander of his actions when operating without orders.
- Plans operations with the help of the platoon sergeant, section leaders, squad leaders, and other key personnel.
- Stays abreast of the situation and goes where needed to supervise, issue FRAGOs, and accomplish the mission.
- Requests from the company commander any support needed to help the platoon perform its mission.
- Helps the platoon sergeant plan and coordinate CSS for the platoon.
- Receives on-hand status reports from the platoon sergeant, section leaders and squad leaders during planning.
- Reviews platoon requirements based on the tactical plan.
- Develops the fire support plan with the platoon sergeant, section leaders, and squad leaders.
- Coordinates the obstacle plan.
- Analyzes tactical situations, disseminates and filters information, and employs the full capabilities of his platoon's equipment (digital or analog) to accomplish the mission.
- Manages C2 information.
- Ensures SITREPs are accurately prepared and sent forward to the company commander.

- Analyzes, and then disseminates to subordinates, pertinent tactical friendly and enemy updates.
- Employs all available assets during limited visibility to designate targets for the direct- and indirect-fire weapons and for situational updates.

b. **Platoon Sergeant.** The platoon leader should consider the platoon sergeant a fighter by trade and place him in the tactical plan either dismounted or maneuvering the mounted element. The platoon sergeant is the senior NCO and most experienced soldier in the platoon. He assists and advises the platoon leader. In the platoon leader's absence, he leads the platoon. He supervises the platoon's administration, logistics, and maintenance. He supervises individual training. He advises the platoon leader on appointments, promotions and reductions, assignments, and discipline of NCOs and enlisted soldiers in the platoon. His *tactical expertise* in platoon operations includes maneuver of the platoon and employment of all weapons. The platoon sergeant also—

- Controls the mounted element when the platoon leader dismounts; or, dismounts with, commands, and controls the platoon when necessary (METT-TC dependent).
- Updates or ensures someone else updates the platoon leader on appropriate reports, and forwards any reports needed by higher headquarters.
- Takes charge of task-organized elements in the platoon during tactical operations, which can include, but is not limited to, quartering parties, support elements in raids or attacks, and security patrols.
- Serves as a BC when the platoon operates mounted.
- Monitors the morale, discipline, and health of platoon members.
- Ensures soldiers maintain all equipment.
- Coordinates and supervises company-directed platoon resupply operations.
- Collects, prepares, and forwards logistical status updates and requests to the company headquarters.
- Ensures ammunition and supplies are properly and evenly distributed after the platoon consolidates on the objective and while the platoon reorganizes.
- Ensures platoon has an adequate amount of batteries on hand.
- Directs the platoon's casualty evacuation process during mounted or dismounted operations.
- Maintains platoon strength information, consolidates and forwards the platoon's casualty reports, and receives and orients replacements.
- Receives section and squad leaders' administrative, logistical, and maintenance reports and requests for rations, water, fuel, and ammunition.
- Ensures soldiers distribute supplies IAW the platoon leader's guidance and direction.

c. **Section Leader.** The section leader assists and advises the platoon leader in the employment of the mounted section. The section leader is responsible for the tactical employment and maintenance of the BFVs within the section. He is also responsible for the individual training of the section's personnel. He is the BC for his BFV.

d. **Platoon Master Gunner.** The platoon master gunner serves as the platoon leader's technical expert on gunnery and turret weapon systems and is the Bradley commander of BFV-3. During combat or field exercises, he advises the platoon leader

and platoon sergeant about BFV weapons effects, capabilities, and safety. He also advises him about fire control measures and preparation. He is the lead technical trainer for the mounted element, under the routine supervision of the platoon sergeant. He helps the platoon leader set up the gunnery task for training.

e. **Bradley Commander.** The platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and the two section leaders serve as the Bradley commander for their BFVs. In the platoon leader's absence (when dismounted), his gunner assumes the responsibilities of the BC. The BC, who remains mounted,—

- Acquires targets.
- Commands the vehicle relative to the section and platoon.
- Controls vehicle fires.
- Ensures the welfare of the crew.
- Holds the vehicle's position in platoon formations.
- Issues fire commands.
- Lays the gun for deflection.
- Maintains the BFV hull and turret.
- Maintains the BFV weapon systems.
- Monitors his CTD for vehicle position, digital overlays, and digital reports (in FBCB2-equipped units).
- Navigates correctly.
- Sends SITREPs as requested or when the vehicle makes contact
- Trains soldiers to use weapons.

f. **Bradley Gunner.** The gunner observes the battlefield to detect enemy targets. He operates the turret weapons as directed by the BC to engage and destroy targets. When only two men remain in the BFV, which occurs rarely, he serves as BC. He bears the responsibility for performing unit-level maintenance on the turret and its weapons systems. He also helps with navigation and with radio operation.

g. **Bradley Driver.** The driver operates the vehicle under the BC's control. The driver follows terrain-driving procedures and tries to select hull-down positions. He also helps detect targets and observe rounds fired. He helps with navigation by monitoring odometer readings and observing terrain. He bears the main responsibility for maintaining the vehicle's automotive (hull) systems.

h. **Rifle Squad Leader.** The rifle squad leader bears the responsibility for all the squad does or fails to do. He is a tactical leader—he leads by example. The rifle squad leader's duties include the following:

- Accounts for soldiers and equipment.
- Completes casualty feeder reports and reviews casualty reports completed by squad members.
- Controls the maneuver of his squad and its rate and distribution of fire: controls two fire teams in the offense; selects each fighting position in the defense; issues commands, codes, and signals to start, stop, and shift fires.
- Directs maintenance of squad weapons and equipment.
- Ensures soldiers in the squads each receive the allotted material and supplies.
- Ensures supplies and equipment are internally cross-leveled within the squad.
- Helps to maintain the hull.



- Informs the platoon leader and platoon sergeant regularly as to the squad's supply status and other squad requirements.
- Inspects the condition of soldier's weapons, clothing, and equipment.
- Manages the logistical and administrative needs of his squad. Requests and issues ammunition, water, rations, and special equipment.
- Passes appropriate information to his team leaders.
- Sends SITREPs and reports as requested by the platoon leader or platoon sergeant.
- Trains his squad on individual and collective tasks required to sustain combat effectiveness.

i. **Team Leader.** Each squad has two fire team leaders, who lead by example. Each team leader is associated with a specific BFV and—

- Controls the fire team's movement and fires.
- Helps the squad leader control the squad tactically.
- Helps the squad leader train team members on individual and collective tasks and battle drills.
- Keeps soldiers in the troop compartment well informed and alert.
- Sends digital SITREPs as requested by the squad leader or as his team makes contact.
- Controls the team's fire and distribution by designating and marking targets.

j. **Squad Members.** Squad members provide any local security needed; they also provide maintenance support for the BFV. Each squad member is equally responsible for the welfare of his squad.

(1) **Rifleman.** Each infantry squad has two riflemen. Each rifleman is equipped with an M16A2 or M4. One rifleman is designated as the antiarmor specialist (see below). The other rifleman in each squad is assigned the M240B under an "arms room" concept, meaning that the leader will decide which weapon to employ resulting from an analysis of the factors of METT-TC.

(2) **Antiarmor Specialist.** As the designated Javelin and AT4 gunner, the squad antiarmor specialist has a Javelin AT missile system. This weapon system gives the squad, platoon, and company a lethal fire-and-forget, man-portable, top attack antiarmor capability. With it, they can defeat enemy main battle tanks during day, night, and adverse weather conditions up to 2,000 meters. If required, the squad antiarmor specialist destroys enemy armor threats that might impede the squad or platoon's progress.

(3) **Grenadier.** The grenadier has an M203 weapon system, which consists of an M16 rifle with attached 40-mm grenade launcher. With the M203, the grenadier gives the fire team an indirect-fire capability out to 350 meters. He can fire high-explosive (HE) rounds to suppress and destroy enemy infantry and lightly armored vehicles. He can also employ smoke to screen and cover his squad's movement, fire, and maneuver. During night and adverse weather conditions, the grenadier can also employ illumination rounds to increase the squad's visibility and to mark enemy or friendly positions.

(4) **Automatic Rifleman.** Each infantry squad has two automatic weapons. The automatic rifleman mainly uses the M249 squad automatic weapon. The M249 gives the squad a high volume of sustained, long-range, suppressive, or lethal fires far beyond the range of the M16 or M4 rifle. The automatic rifleman uses the M249 to suppress enemy

infantry and bunkers, to destroy enemy automatic rifle and antitank teams, and to enable other teams and squads to maneuver.